AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1 (Cancelled).

2 (Currently amended). The system of claim [1] 3, wherein said verification means comprises:

user information storage means for storing user information identifying at least one user permitted to operate the office automation device,

user information input means for inputting identification information identifying a user operating the office automation device, and

user verification means for verifying a user operating the office automation device in accordance with identification information input via the user information input means and user information stored in the user information storage means,

the information acquisition means comprising:

counting means for counting an amount of usage of the office automation device by the verified user, and

information creation means for creating device usage information, the device usage information comprising the amount of usage of the office automation device counted by the counting means and

information for identifying the verified user.

3 (Currently amended). ~~The system of claim 1, comprising:~~ A system for managing a networked office automation device arranged and networked in a work place, comprising:

verification means for verifying operation of the office automation device by a verified user in the work place,

information acquisition means for acquiring device usage information including a value indicating an amount of usage of the office automation device by the verified user,

information storage means for sequentially storing the device usage information acquired by the information acquisition means,

amount acquisition means for acquiring a usage amount record of the office automation device based upon device usage information stored in the information storage means,

comparison means for comparing the usage amount record and a reference value and producing a comparison result, and

output means for outputting a message corresponding to the comparison result.

4 (Currently amended). The system of claim [1] 3, comprising:

amount acquisition means for acquiring a usage amount record of an arbitrary office automation device used by an arbitrary user based upon device usage information stored in the information storage means,

comparison means for comparing the usage amount record and a reference value and producing a comparison result, and

output means for outputting a message corresponding to the comparison result.

5 (Currently amended). The system of claim [1] 3, wherein the office automation device comprises a replaceable, expendable component, comprising:

amount acquisition means for acquiring a usage amount record of the office automation device subsequent to replacement of the replaceable, expendable component in the office automation device, based upon device usage information stored in the information storage means,

comparison means for comparing the usage amount record and a reference value and producing a comparison result, and

output means for outputting a message corresponding to the comparison result.

6 (Currently amended). The system of claim [1] 3, wherein the user is associated with a section, comprising:

amount acquisition means for acquiring a totalized usage amount record indicating a usage amount of the office automation device totalized for the section associated with the user, based upon device usage information stored in the information storage means,

comparison means for comparing the totalized usage amount record and a reference value and producing a comparison result, and

output means for outputting a message corresponding to the comparison result.

7-14 (Cancelled).

15 (Currently amended). ~~The method of claim 14, comprising:~~ A method for managing usage of a networked office automation device arranged and networked in a work place, comprising:

verifying a user in the work place operating the office automation device,

obtaining an amount of usage of the office automation device made by the verified user operating the office automation device,

acquiring usage information of the office automation device comprising the obtained amount of usage of the office automation device,

storing the acquired usage information in a database,

processing the usage information stored in the database, and

based on a comparison of the amount of usage and a reference value,

sending a message corresponding to a comparison result to at least one of a user of the office automation device and an administrator of the office automation device.

16-17 (Cancelled).

18 (Currently amended). A computer program for executing a method of managing use of a networked office automation device arranged and networked in a work place, the method comprising:

verifying a user in the work place operating the office automation device,

obtaining an amount of usage of the office automation device made by the verified user operating the office automation device,

acquiring usage information of the office automation device comprising the obtained amount of usage of the office automation device, ~~and~~

storing the acquired usage information in a database,

processing the usage information stored in the database, and

based on a comparison of the amount of usage and a reference value,

sending a message corresponding to a comparison result to at least one of user of the office automation device and an administrator of the office automation device.

19 (Cancelled).

20 (Currently amended). A computer data signal embodied in a carrier wave, for controlling a computer to execute a method for managing usage of a networked office automation device arranged and networked in a work place, comprising:

verifying a user in the work place operating the office automation device,

obtaining an amount of usage of the office automation device made by the verified user operating the office automation device,

acquiring usage information of the office automation device comprising the obtained amount of usage of the office automation device, and

sequentially storing the acquired usage information in a database,

processing the usage information stored in the database, and

based on a comparison of the amount of usage and a reference value,

sending a message corresponding to a comparison result to at least one of user of the office automation device and an administrator of the office automation device.

21 (Cancelled).